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Approved For Release 2003/03/28 : CIA-RDP80R01731R003300310006-0

23 June 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Report of the Ad Hoc UN Committee on Forced Labor
and Exploitation Thereof

1. The attached report of the UN ad hoc committee on forced labor will be released to the press on 24 June. Its content can be briefly summarized as follows:

a. In the section of the report dealing with the Soviet Union (pp. 82-98), the UN committee in cautious language concludes on the basis of the evidence submitted to it that a system of forced labor is in fact employed by the Soviets "as a means of political coercion or punishment for holding or expressing political views"; that political offenders "are for the most part employed in corrective labor camps or colonies on large-scale projects, on the development of mining areas or previously uncultivated regions"; and that restrictions on the freedom of employment are such that they lead "to a system of forced or compulsory labor constituting an important element in the economy of the country."

b. While concluding that corrective labor camps and colonies appear to be scattered over the whole of the Soviet Union, the report avoids an attempt to estimate the number of such camps and persons detained in them because of lack of sufficient current evidence.

c. Concerning the numerous charges made against the United States by the Soviets and satellites, the report concludes that most of these allegations are either irrelevant to the committee's terms of reference or not substantiated by the evidence. However, in extremely mild terms, the report does find that the local administration within the U.S. of the legislation concerning Mexican immigrants and concerning vagrancy is sufficiently loose to lead to practices that in a few cases resemble forced labor. The report goes on to point out that these practices are directly outlawed in the U.S. and that when local offenses are brought to the knowledge of the U.S. Government the laws are in fact enforced. On the whole, the section of the report dealing with the U.S. is a substantial refutation of the charges made by the Soviets.

d. It is relevant that in the appendix of the report summarizing the evidence submitted against the Soviet Union (pp. 426-528)

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much of the effective evidence submitted by non-governmental organizations was collected by groups supported by the Agency. Among these are the Commission Internationale contre le Regime Concentrationnaire, the International Federation of Free Journalists and the Hungarian National Council.

2. Exploitation of the report. In spite of the careful and cautious language used, the report has considerable significance in view of the fact that it is the first conclusive finding by an objective duly authorized international tribunal of the fact that widespread use is made by the Soviets of slave labor. The following steps are being taken to insure maximum exploitation:

a. The International Commission against the Concentration Camp System has been alerted and will begin a well-publicized campaign to the effect that the UN findings are formal substantiation of the charges that it has long been endeavoring to call to the attention of world opinion.

b. The National Committee for a Free Europe has been alerted and will make maximum use of this ammunition over RFE.

c. A number of American labor leaders attending the international meeting of the ICFTU which begins on 4 July have been briefed on the significance of this report and well-publicized action by the ICFTU can be expected. This action will be in line with the attack recently made by the Secretary General of the ICFTU on the Soviet repression of trade union protests in East Germany.

d. The Congress for Cultural Freedom has also been alerted and will take appropriate action to dramatize the significance of the committee's findings.

Chief

International Organizations Division